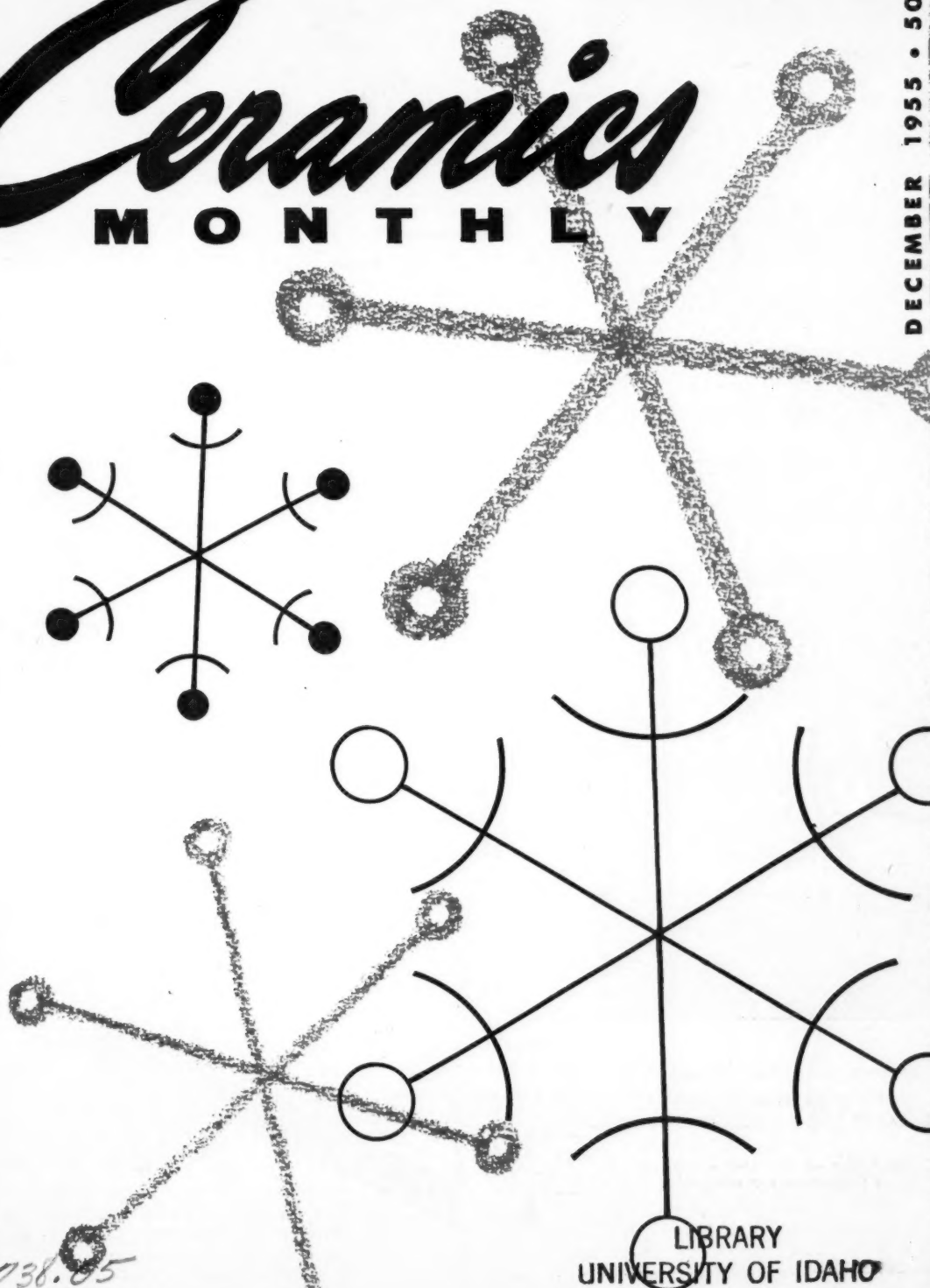


# Ceramics

MONTHLY

DECEMBER 1955 • 50c



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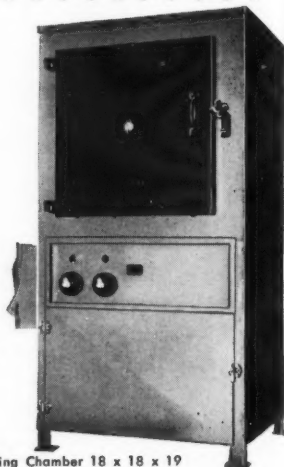
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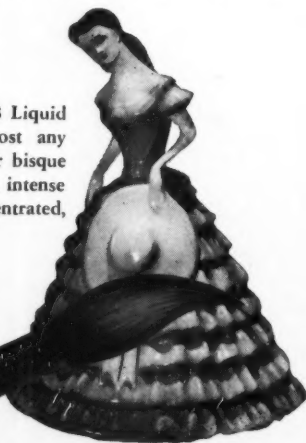
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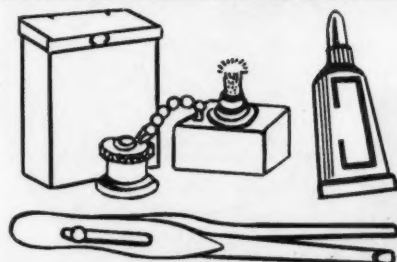


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# Ceramics MONTHLY

Volume 3, Number 12

DECEMBER • 1955

50 cents per copy

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## coming up in CM

### underglazes

By popular request . . . The whys, wherefores, and how to's of underglaze decorating—on a monthly basis!

Handling the assignment will be Madge Tummins, of Houston, Texas, who, we are told, has been teaching underglaze decorating since long before the advent of today's convenient single-stroke products, "when you had to grind your colors with water, add glycerine, etc." In fact, she operated the first ceramic supply shop in the entire Mississippi Valley area.

We can assure you that she will leave no "u.g. stone" unturned.

### flowers

By popular request . . . The two articles on ceramic flowers for jewelry by Bea Matney (September, October) touched off a demand for "more of the same." Mrs. Matney is happy to oblige and next month will bring you the first of a new series on making flowers from clay.

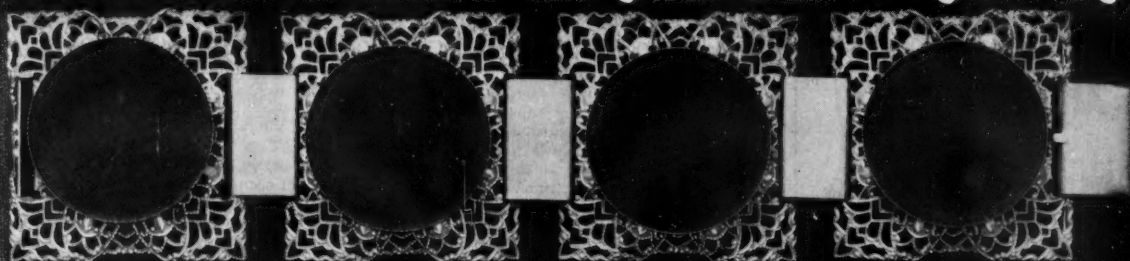
Starting with a demonstration of the simplest type (the calla lily, one petal), Mrs. Matney will gradually work toward the more complex blooms—complex only at first glance, that is. The close-up camera and careful text make the most difficult flower an easy task.

### enameling

By popular request . . . You've met Enamelist Kathe Berl before ("My Enamel Picture," April, and "3-D Ornaments," November). She will be back, on a monthly basis now, to supply the demand for general information on theory and techniques for beginning and advanced hobbyists and student enamelists. Calling on her many years of professional experience, Kathe Berl has come up with some choice tips and helpful suggestions, although she cautions, "I can't tell any of my secrets—because I really don't have any!" (Of course, the "Jo Rebert Enamels" series stays with us.)



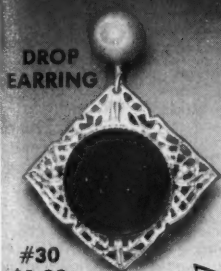
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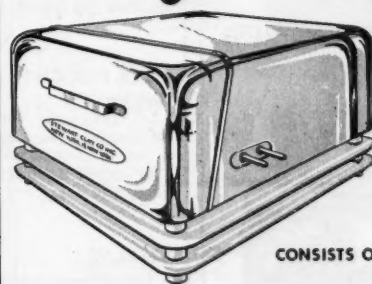
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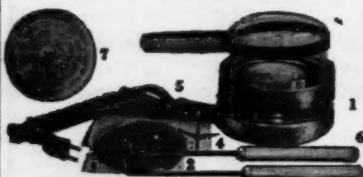
It's so easy to learn to do (free scrolling instructions with every kit) and man, oh man, what lovely things this REDHEAD does. Why not get yourself one gals, just in case he won't let you use his? It also makes a perfect gift for any friend with a yen for copper — she'll love it and YOU for being so thoughtful.

The REDHEAD KIT is YOURS for . . .

**\$10.50 POSTPAID**

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# letters

## DOG-EARED CM

Gentlemen:

Please send [another October issue]. Our dog chewed our subscription copy to pieces after my husband had only glanced at it, and he was much chagrined . . . He says CM is the most useful and interesting publication he subscribes to! . . . (Our dog is just a pup, so don't think badly of him . . .)

MRS. C. H. GARNSEY  
Amarillo, Texas

◆ We will take full responsibility for the behavior of the pup. The dachshund on page 4 and the cats on pages 15 and 35 must have been too strong a temptation.—Ed.

## OF CHAFF AND WHEAT

Gentlemen:

I have watched your publication start on a very high plane—then, as I feared, go steadily down hill until a new low in journalism was reached with your December, 1954, issue.

I had every intention of letting my subscription run out; however, signs of improvement were evident with your 1955 issues, and as a potter I feel that I should be aware of the good articles—sorting the wheat from the chaff on my own, so to speak.

As a teacher I have never believed that education should come down to low levels in order to meet students. For that reason, I feel that the content of your magazine should maintain as high a plane as possible in order to challenge and stimulate the reader. You will agree, I trust, that your magazine is within the realm of what is called educational.

So, I wish you would stop catering to those who are looking for short cuts to success. Can we agree that there are no shortcuts to sound craftsmanship and wisdom? . . .

Good luck to you. I shall try CM for another year, with reservations.

WILLIAM WYMAN  
North Weymouth, Mass.

## INDEX FOR CM?

Gentlemen:

. . . I hope [you will index] all the information [in CM]. I know it will mean a lot of work, but then, the success of your excellent magazine has been built on hard work as you well know . . .

MILDA R. TROESCHER  
Cleveland, Ohio

Gentlemen:

I have been subscribing to CM since before the publication of Vol. I, No. 1, and it is the reason for my continued and increasing interest in the pursuit of potting as a hobby. The suggestions from other amateurs and, of course, the professionals, have put within my reach the possibility of making some very satisfying pieces.

[I have prepared my own index] of suggestions taken from various parts of the magazine. These I listed under subject, cross-indexed as necessary, and placed in a loose-leaf notebook. The number of

times I have referred to my work-sheet index have amply justified the work I have put into it . . .

(Mrs.) H. GAIL HAMMOND  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Gentlemen:

Do you compile an index for CM? If so I would like very much to purchase one . . . It is nearly impossible to find certain items quickly and easily, even though I have been attempting to keep a crude index of my own.

I feel certain that there would be a great demand for such an index on the part of your subscribers—either annual or semi-annual—which could be inserted along with the magazines in the CM binders.

My bound copies are used constantly by my classes and I know they would all appreciate a ready guide of this sort.

JEANNE S. HOGE  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

◆ No, the editors have not prepared a subject index for CM, although the matter has been carefully discussed on several occasions. If sufficient interest does exist, and if the task seems generally feasible, we will be happy to undertake it. Meanwhile, perhaps Mrs. Hammond will share her index with Miss Hoge, since, coincidentally and conveniently, they are "neighbors."—Ed.

## MORE ON ASH GLAZES

Gentlemen:

I read with more than usual interest the article in your October issue on "Wood Ash Glazes". While at Cranbrook Academy, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., I developed a low-fire ash glaze (cone 04-02) . . . My findings were . . . published in the August, 1945, issue of the *Journal of the American Ceramic Society*.

I am enclosing a reprint of that article which you may send to the author. It might be of assistance in his further work with wood ashes.

HALDON L. THURN  
Milwaukee, Wis.

◆ Anyone interested in Mr. Thurn's article may obtain the back issue by sending \$1.50 to the American Ceramic Society, 4055 N. High St., Columbus, Ohio.—Ed.

## COVER COMMENT

Gentlemen:

Ever since your first issue I have greatly enjoyed your magazine. Among its high spots to me have been the covers . . .

But what has happened to the handsome, different and modern designs for your covers? Usually so lovely, but the October cover, with its photography, in my humble opinion, has made your magazine quite ordinary and lacking its former stylish appearance. Please! Keep your covers stylish, creative in modern design, and different . . .

ESTHER L. LAINHART  
Endicott Public Schools  
Endicott, N. Y.

COME TO THE PARTY . . . and bring a friend

(see page 34)

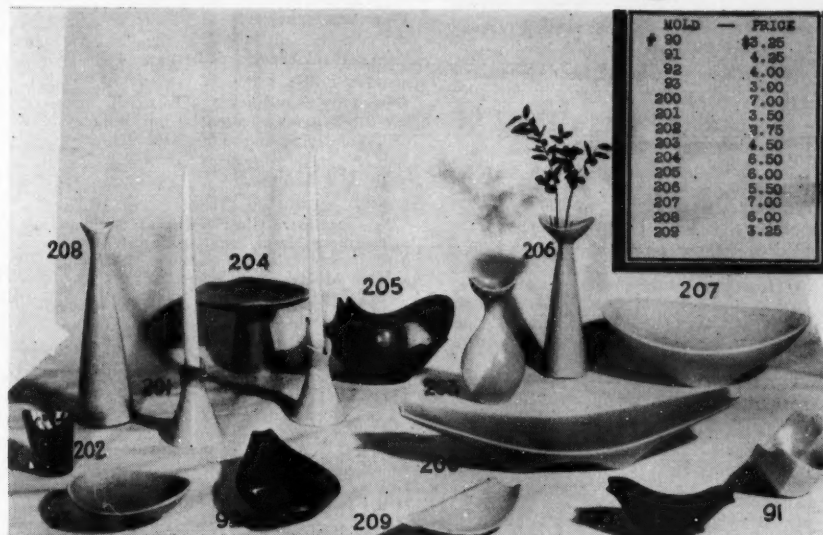


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**MASTER POTTER'S WHEEL**

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Massive steel construction completely encloses mechanism to exclude clay and moisture . . . assures operator safety and provides vibration-free performance. Other features ordinarily found only in expensive wheels include: pre-lubricated bronze bearings for quiet, long service, convenient arm rests, adjustable wedging wire, large 18" throwing table with plenty of working space and a removable water cup. 10" throwing head has joggles for easy centering, underside reverses for casting plaster bats.

You have complete hand freedom at all times . . . smooth instant change of speed from 30 to 150 rpm is controlled by a foot pedal. Easy to use, even for handicapped persons. Use any 1/4 HP motor. Standard 1/4 HP motor \$16.95 when purchased with Master Potter's Wheel.

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MASTER POTTER'S WHEEL Bench Model, Item 47a, Wt. 45 lbs. Lists at \$125.00—Factory price

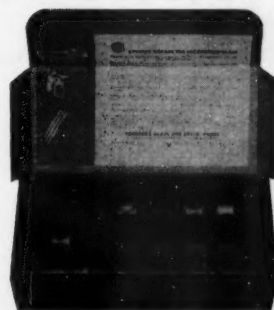
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# itinerary

Send show announcements early—Where to Show: three months ahead of entry date; Where to Go: at least six weeks before opening.

## WHERE TO SHOW

★national competition

### CANADA, Montreal

opening February 10

Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition at The Canadian Handicrafts Guild, 2025 Peel St. Includes pottery, ceramic sculpture, enameling-on-metal; Canadian craftsmen eligible. Prizes; entry fee, \$1. Work due February 17.

### FLORIDA, Miami

April 15-29

★Fourth Annual Miami National Ceramic Exhibition. Jury; awards. Entry fee, \$3; work due March 29. For entry blanks, write Marcell Dunn, 908 Paradiso Ave., Coral Gables, Florida.

### OHIO, Youngstown

January 1-29

Eighth Annual Ceramic and Sculpture Show at The Butler Institute of American Art. For current and former residents of Ohio. Jury; \$750 purchase prizes. Entry fee, \$2; entries due Dec. 18. For blanks, write Secretary at the Institute, 524 Wick Ave.

## WHERE TO GO

### ARIZONA, Phoenix

December 15-January 15

California Designed—house furnishings and accessories including ceramics. At Fine Arts Center.

### COLORADO, Colorado Springs

January 1-30

Design in Scandinavia—Over 700 mass-produced items selected by top designers; at Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center.

### IOWA, Des Moines

through January 8

"Dig This Iowa Clay"—display of decorative pieces and industrial products—under auspices of the Children's Museum at Des Moines Art Center.

### ILLINOIS, Chicago

through December 31

Midwest Potters and Sculptors annual exhibit at Robert North Designs, Inc., 41 E. Walton St.

### MAINE, Portland

through December 24

Crafts for Christmas Gifts exhibition-sale at the Portland Museum of Art.

### MINNESOTA, St. Paul

through December 23

Fiber, Clay and Metal exhibition (national competition) at St. Paul Gallery.

### NEW JERSEY, Newark

through December

4th Annual Christmas Exhibition-Sale at

the Newark Museum.

### NEW MEXICO, Santa Fe

January 15-February 5

American Craftsmen 1955, a traveling show circulated by Smithsonian Institution. At Museum of International Folk Art.

### NEW YORK, New York

through December 23

Greenwich House Potters annual exhibition and Christmas sale at 16 Jones St.

### NEW YORK, Rochester

December 12-January 3

American Jewelry and Related Objects; at Rochester Memorial Art Gallery.

### OHIO, Canton

January 1-29

18th Ceramic National (The Syracuse Show) at Canton Art Institute.

### PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia

through December 31

Combination show of Olin Russum's ceramics and Jean Russum's furniture—at Philadelphia Art Alliance, 251 S. 18 St. Also, "Crafts for Christmas Giving."

### TENNESSEE, Chattanooga

December 8-29

85 pieces from Third Annual Ceramic Exhibit sponsored by Ceramic League of Miami—at Chattanooga Art Association.

### WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 5-February 5

10th Annual Area Exhibition at Corcoran Gallery of Art; includes crafts.

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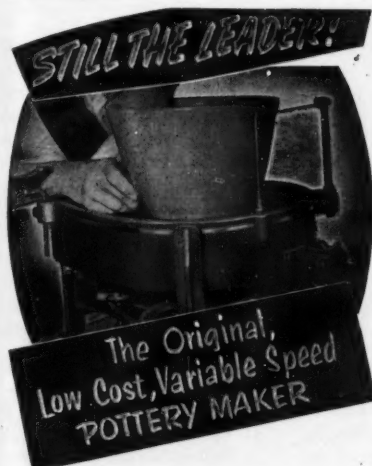


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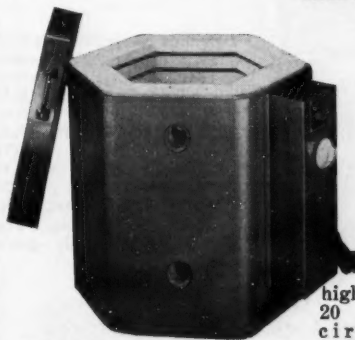
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# suggestions

from our readers

## SAVE YOUR SHELVES

For those ceramists who do contract firing and take in work with glaze of doubtful firing characteristics, it is advisable to use shelves that may already have been damaged by glaze dripping rather than take a chance on spoiling new ones. A good kiln wash for these shelves as well as new ones can be made by using equal portions of china clay, flint and fine grog. The addition of grog to the mixture will allow for evening off the uneven shelves.

—Irving and Lee Levy  
Levittown, L. I., N. Y.

able sizes. A small hole at one end of each segment, for hanging it, will allow you to keep a permanent record of your glaze tests.

—Irving and Lee Levy  
Levittown, L. I., N. Y.

## ENAMELING KILNS FOR GOLD FIRING

Many ceramists are also doing copper enameling and I wonder how many know they can do a gold firing on their small ceramic jewelry in one of the tiny enameling kilns. This does give excellent results and is a wonderful time-saver!

—Peg Townsend  
Tucson, Ariz.

## JEWELRY STILTS

A quick and easy way to stilt small pieces of jewelry is to put drops of very thick kiln wash on a bisque tile and then set each piece of jewelry on one of the tiny kiln wash mounds before it completely solidifies. The kiln wash acts like a cement, holding the pieces securely so that the tile, with the many pieces of jewelry on it, can be set into the kiln without having anything tip over.

After the firing, the jewelry can be lifted from the kiln wash mounds without its having the slightest tendency to stick.

—Virginia Voelker  
Asbury Park, N. J.

## SCREEN FOR CLEAN-UP

A small piece of wire screening is ideal for trimming and cleaning green ware, either leather hard or dry. To make the "tool," fold two edges of a square piece (approximately 4" x 4") to form a rectangle with stiff sides.

These screens are excellent cutters and can remove great quantities of clay. The unwanted clay (if wet) comes out in strings through the



## GLAZE TEST CHIPS

You can easily make a large number of test chips at one time by the following process. Lay four boards on a large plaster bat so that it forms a frame; the size of the frame would depend on the size of the bat and the number of tiles wanted. Pour slip onto the bat within the frame to about 1/4 inch thick. Allow the slip to set up and then cut it into suit-

holes instead of building up at the cutting surface, hampering the cutting operation. Because of the broad cutting surface of the screen, there is no danger of its twisting and digging into the ware. The stiff, rolled-up sides permit excellent control for long, sweeping strokes.

—Raymond A. Lubway  
Chicago, Ill.

## Dollars for your Thoughts

CM pays \$1 to \$5 for each item used in this column. Send your bright ideas to Ceramics Monthly, 4175 N. High St., Columbus 14, Ohio. Sorry, but we can't acknowledge or return unused items.



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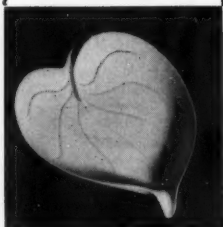
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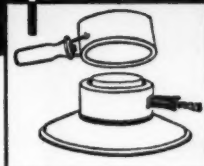
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# Christmas Motifs

*From England's Chelsea Pottery*

Photos: British Information Service



SCULPTURE (top) is of James the Apostle, from a set of 12 by Anna Adams. Santa Claus and reindeer are part of a wheel-thrown set which in full swing includes eight deer, each 18" long. Shown at the potter's wheel is David Rawnsley, Chelsea's guiding spirit.

Sophisticated reindeer and naive Nativity figures, wheel-thrown at the Chelsea Pottery in London, have been featured in the Christmas windows of great department stores in New York and London. Such sculpture, as well as decorated plates that look like "pictures," is undoubtedly at the root of the English pottery's growing reputation. In addition to these well-known types, however, Chelsea ware includes tiles and mosaics, figurines and larger works, bowls and dishes, etc. The fact that the pottery represents the combined efforts of a guild of artists and potters makes for versatility and individuality. No two pieces of Chelsea ware are ever exactly the same, and each is given a registered number. When a customer buys a piece he is provided with the name of the artist who worked on it. The imaginative guiding hand at Chelsea Pottery is David Rawnsley who started the enterprise. ●



NATIVITY SCULPTURE is also by Anna Adams. The decorated plates, another Chelsea Pottery specialty, are done by various artists.





# ALTERN DRAIN FORM

by DOROTHY PERKINS

Here we have another article in the plaster series, "Models and Molds." Begun last February, the series is based on the author's conviction that cast ware can be as creative as pottery made by any other process. Mrs. Perkins has described the pin template and horizontal template methods of making models in previous issues. In subsequent issues, she will show how molds for irregular shapes may be made and also offer a good deal of valuable advice on casting in general. As we said earlier, the series when completed will comprise the most detailed and authoritative information available on the subject of models and molds.—Ed.

**A**lmost everyone who has done drain-casting has had the experience of removing a piece too soon from the mold. The result is a casting that is bent or warped to some degree, and an attempt is usually made to pat the form back into its round shape. The purpose of this article is to urge intentional early removal of a casting from its mold and manipulation of the still-pliable ware, thus encouraging the study of form through alterations in cast pieces.

Drain-cast pieces offer an excellent opportunity for form variations. They can be quickly and easily cast and the possibilities for alteration are unlimited; indeed, possibilities increase in number with each manipulation. Illustrated here are only a few of innumerable ideas.

1. These are three castings from

the same mold, the piece at the left being the original form. The center form has had part of the lip edge cut away and the upper portion of the piece has been flattened into an elliptical shape. The piece at the right has had part of the upper portion cut away, thereby changing its basic proportions.

2. Here is another vertical shape; on this form, however, the major alterations are confined to the body instead of to the lip as was the case in the first examples. The center form was paddled with a knife handle which flattened and ridged the body and lip.

The form at the right was removed from the mold as soon as it was stiff enough to stand. The sides were then stroked with wet sponges and fingers until pressed tightly together. Finally, an opening was cut through the center area.

3. In this vertical shape, the original form (left) is unchanged except for the pattern cut through the wall. While this process, usually termed piercing, does not change the basic profile of a form, it does create light and dark areas which alters the character of the piece. The form at right has been more drastically changed by cutting V-shaped pieces from the top and bending in the remainder of the lip edge.

4. Piercing of the wall was the only alteration on this low bowl. This permits a play of light, which makes

the piece essentially different from the original.

5. The original form, unaltered, is at the right. The piece to the left, cast from the same mold, was pinched together and cut down at the lip edge, then openings were cut through the walls at two points.

6. The basic shape of the piece at the left remains unchanged except for the bold indentations made with a teaspoon. The piece at the right was patted out of round and also paddled with a knife handle.

7. This piece was cast in the identical mold used for the forms in number 6 above. The shape was cut down rather drastically, and the edge notched for area interest.

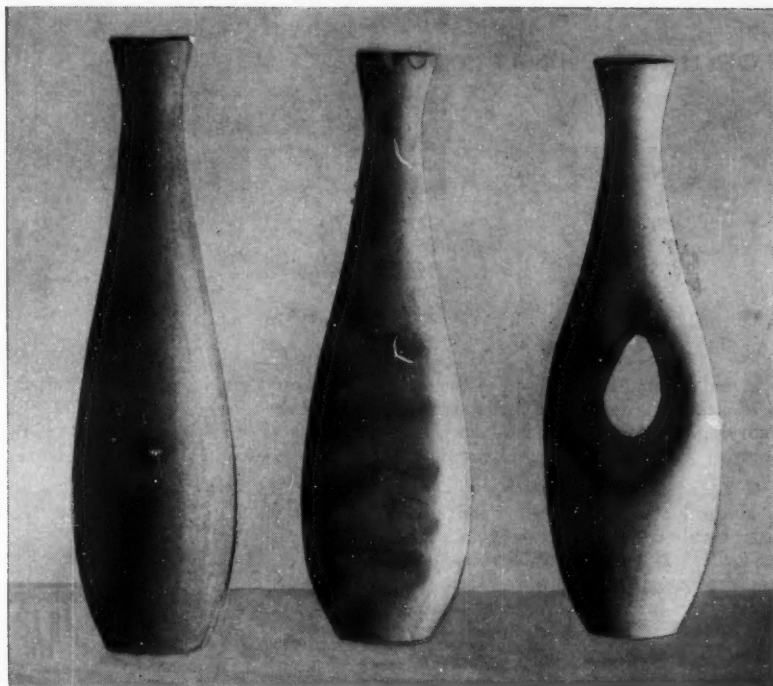
8. Scraping and grooving provide the accents on these thick-walled, cast bowls. In addition, the piece at the right was flattened so that the top edge would be squared.

It is often difficult to visualize form in sketching or in cutting templates. A form does not always "come alive" until a three-dimensional model has been built—sometimes not until the first casting is made in the mold. Your difficulties in visualizing forms will lessen as your intimacy with forms increases.

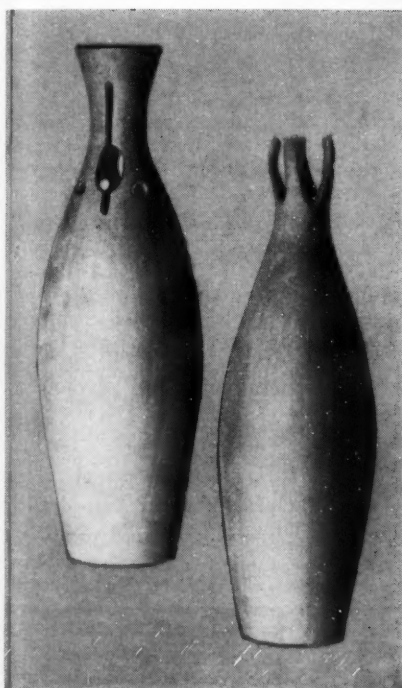
That "intimacy breeds contempt" does not seem valid, however, as far as form study is concerned: form relationships are never-ending. •



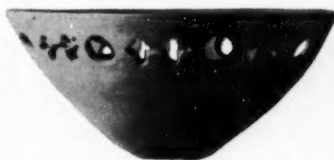
# RING NCAST MS



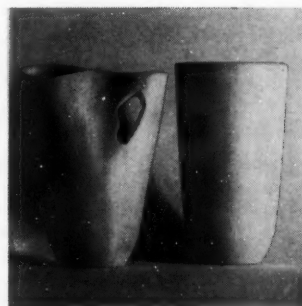
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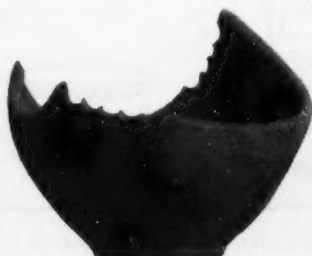


5



6

8



7





# ACID ETCHING

by MADGE TUMMINS



**A**cid etching is a method of decorating glazed ware through the "carving" action of a special (hydrofluoric) acid. The principle involved is this:

Hydrofluoric acid will dissolve a fired ceramic glaze (and the fired clay as well!). If the acid is swabbed on a glazed surface and allowed to remain for a few minutes, it will attack the surface and produce a rough texture. This acid will not attack tars and waxes so, to obtain a special decoration, portions of the glazed surface can be masked off with a material such as asphaltum. A roughened surface will be produced where the glaze was exposed to the acid attack and the original smooth surface will be retained where the glaze was covered with resist material.

Hard white or ivory china is best to use for etching; soft china and pottery pieces do not etch well. For your early attempts, select a small flat piece like a small tray or bread-and-butter plate. Stay away from naturalistic designs as they do not lend themselves too well to this technique; the conventional or semi-conventional designs are recommended. The technique lends itself ideally to either allover decorations or border designs.

When the decoration has been decided upon and sketched on the surface of the china, the portion of the

decoration that is to be left raised and retain the original gloss of the glazed surface is given a heavy coating of asphaltum. This material may be purchased from your ceramic supplier or from a local paint or hardware store. (When asphaltum is left open, it dries and becomes sticky and difficult to work with. It is best, therefore, to transfer a small amount to an old saucer or lid and to close the container.) Asphaltum should be used at about the consistency of enamel paint so that it will flow on freely and neatly. Should it become too thick, turpentine can be used to thin it.

Medium-sized sable brushes are best for applying asphaltum. Dip only the tip of the brush into the material and apply to the china with a free-flowing stroke. Be careful about keeping the edges neat, for ragged edges will show up on the finished piece.

Asphaltum should be so applied as to leave no thin places in the work (these will show up as a brownish color). The acid can eat through such thin layers and destroy the planned decoration. The application of asphaltum must be thick and heavy on every part of the piece that is not to be etched: this includes the under portion for hydrofluoric acid fumes alone can attack glaze and pit surfaces. When the asphaltum is thoroughly dry, the piece is ready for

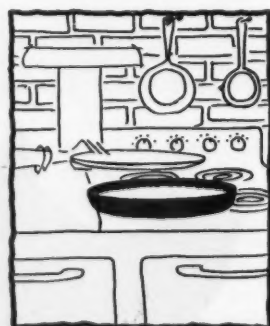
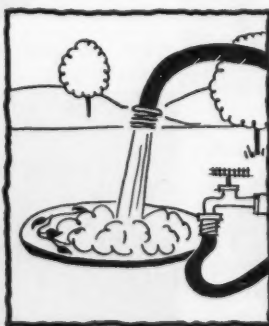
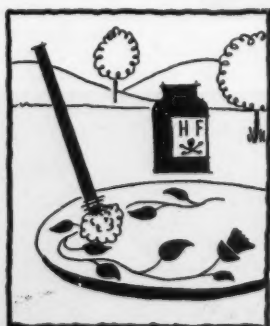
the acid etching process.

*Extreme caution should be used when handling hydrofluoric acid.* As mentioned above, even the acid fumes are harmful and it is best to work out-of-doors or at least in a well-ventilated room. An excellent precaution would be to wear rubber gloves; and if you are working out-of-doors, be sure the wind is at your back so that the fumes will be carried away from you. If the acid should come in contact with your skin, wash immediately with water and then dab on baking soda. Keep the acid bottle tightly capped to prevent evaporation.

Warm china will etch much faster than cool china. The piece to be etched can be placed in an oven to warm or on top of a kiln that is firing, or even out in the sun.

Place the china on a rack or a board or any other firm surface. Take a stick, some 14 to 16 inches long, and tie a cotton swab at one end, making sure it will be small enough to go into the neck of the acid bottle. Dip the swab into the bottle and gently pat all over the portions of the plate to be etched. Do not pour the acid on the plate: this will create a deeper etch where the acid first hits the piece. And do not rub the acid onto the piece for this can disturb the asphaltum covering and ruin the design.

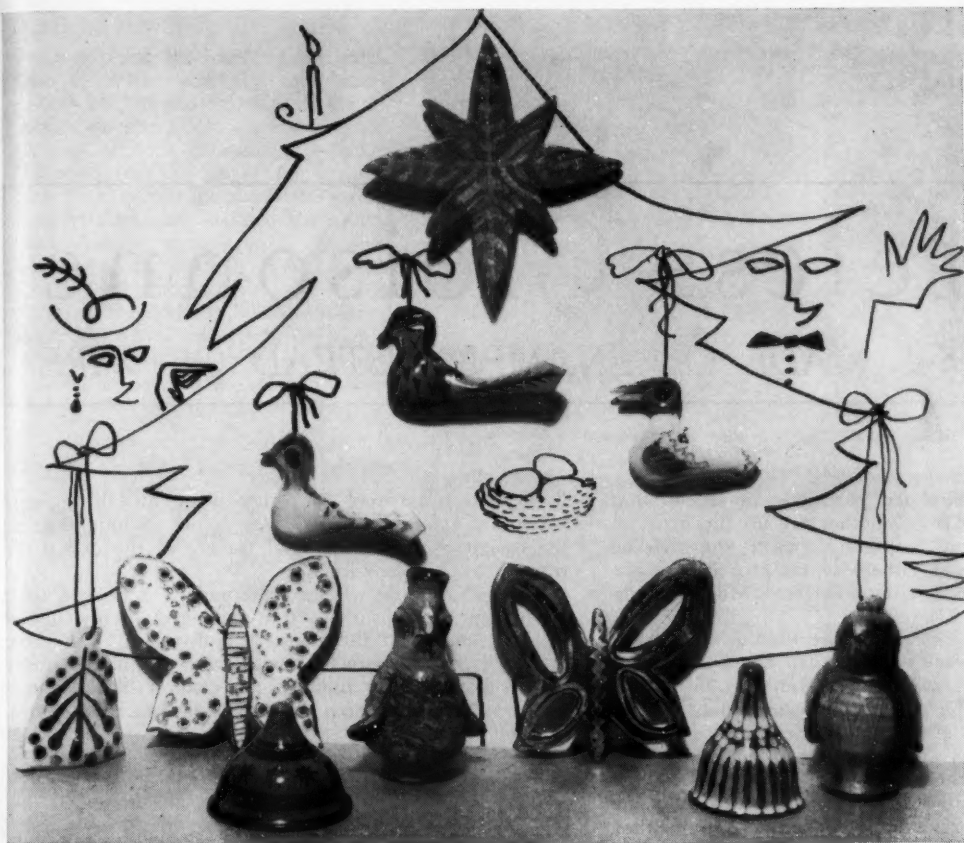
(Please turn to Page 26)



Procedure for acid etching: 1) the piece is covered with asphaltum wherever etching is not desired; 2) acid is swabbed overall, then 3)

it is rinsed off and the asphaltum removed; 4) simmering in soda solution completes the process. Full details are given in the text.





at  
Greenwich  
House  
Pottery

# CHRISTMAS TREE CERAMICS

by JANE HARTSOOK

Small decorative objects of considerable charm—bells and birds, stars and butterflies, appealing little figures of serene Madonnas, jauntily snowmen and jolly Santa Clauses, in soft bright colors with touches of gold and silver—these are a low-priced feature of the traditional Christmas sale of the Greenwich House Potters in New York. (The sale this year runs through Dec. 23 at 16 Jones St.)

Gift items at the well-known event are by no means limited to the frivolous and miniature, of course. Innumerable substantial pieces, ranging from fruit bowls to powder bowls, pitchers to platters, bottles to lamps, are also offered. But the light-hearted ornaments are the frosting on the sale, the ceramic expression of the spirit of the season.

In the forming, many of the tree and table decorations are simply cut from a slab of clay, then shaped by bending into three-dimensional forms. This not only produces intriguing designs but helps to make stacking and firing easier. The pieces are glazed on

both sides, and the edges or points of contact are wiped dry so they do not have to be stilted when placed in the kiln.

Some of the little items are thrown on the wheel—as Patricia Clark, instructor at the Greenwich House Pottery, demonstrates in the photos at right. Making a three-and-a-half-inch-high owl, she throws the basic form off the top of a lump of clay, then cuts and models the hollow piece by pressing and pinching with her fingers. One finished bird, ready for the sale, is partially glazed—bright yellow breast, beak and wing tips—with red clay showing otherwise; the interior is glazed bright red—to show when the bird is hung high.

The Greenwich House Potters see their “frivolities” not only serving as Christmas ornaments but doubling as table decorations, place-card holders, curtain tiebacks, party favors and general conversation pieces throughout the year. Some of them, we think, are bound to find permanent places in collectors’ cabinets. ●



**WHEEL-THROWN:** Patricia Clark starts small, decorative creatures on the wheel, adds detail by cutting and by modeling with her fingers.



# Wireless Cloisonné

## PARTITIONS MADE OF ENAMEL INSTEAD OF WIRE

In cloisonné enameling the partitions, or fences, that separate one color from another are usually made of wire, but in what I call *wireless cloisonné*, the dividing lines are made of enamel. Otherwise, the procedure is just the same as for regular cloisonné (see "Modern Cloisonné," July).

In using enamel instead of wire for the fences, you have a good deal of leeway. They can be of any color, and of varying or the same width. Innumerable effects can be achieved in the overall piece depending on the background on which the dividing lines are applied. If, for example, the lines are placed on bare copper, you can fill in the partitioned areas with transparents which are wonderful over copper—the color and brilliance of the finished piece closely resembling a stained glass window (see finished piece below). Instead of bare metal, silver or gold foil (or bits of foil) covering all or part of the piece may be the background for the fences—then, in the spaces you can take advantage of the much wider color range possible when you use transparents over foil. Quite different results can be obtained if the dividing lines are applied on a coating of flux or white, or a combination of colors—fine effects come from transparents over flux or white! These are only a few of the possibilities.

In my own wireless cloisonné, I frequently use black enamel for the fences because it has a receding quality; it also lends richness to the transparents, and by contrast makes them seem even more transparent and brilliant.

But any one color or combination might be used effectively for partitions.

The kind of line you make determines, to a great extent, the strength or boldness of the design. As you work out your plan on paper, therefore, it is a good idea to simulate the width of line desired. Use a brush or wide pen point for this; a pencil line distorts the actual size of the space and lacks the proper feeling for the purpose.

Like other cloisonné, the wireless type seems to call for a boundary or frame

around the rim to hold the fences together (as in the finished pieces shown on these pages). A successful design without framing might, however, be created.

It is a good idea, in your paper sketch, to make the

lines with waterproof ink; then you can fill in your value and color plan with water colors without blurring the design. And make a final tracing of the design for transfer to the piece itself.

To show how wireless cloisonné is done, we shall go through the steps involved in making the richly colored pendant shown in the photo-demonstration. The piece has been counterenameled (with two spots in the upper section left bare for findings); a coat of black enamel has been fired on the top side; and the piece is, of course, thoroughly clean.

1. The background for the fences is composed of bits of silver foil which will give a mosaic-like texture and add brilliance to the transparent colors to be laid in the partitioned panels. The surface of the piece is covered with agar and the foil laid on overall. When dry, the piece is fired, burnished and cleaned (for details on the process, see "Bits of Foil," June).

2. The design for the piece is traced on the foil background with a hard-pointed tool which makes the tracing dark enough to be clearly visible. Red carbon (the marks burn out) is used.

3. A medium-fusing, washed, black enamel is used for the fences (I prefer the medium-fusing to the soft-type because it can withstand many firings). It is ground fine with mortar and pestle, then sifted through a 100-mesh screen; about a half-teaspoonful is shaken onto a few drops of thick agar and mixed with a tiny spatula. To obtain a good spreading consistency and maintain it, I spray with a little water, repeating at intervals.

(If you want lines that are very thin or vary greatly in width, it might be well to mix the fine-ground enamel with a combination of lavender oil and squeegee oil instead of agar—a process described in "Lines in a Design," August. This will enable you to scrape and shape the lines when dry.)

BACKGROUND makes a difference in the author's work shown on this page: above, metal foil beneath makes color glow; at left, the stained-glass-window effect comes from copper background.





In applying the lines, a sable brush, size 0, works well for most small pieces but, in general, the choice depends on the width of line wanted. A tiny amount of enamel is picked up with just the tip of the brush—this is the way to make fences neatly and swiftly—and laid on the traced line. If the entire brush becomes clogged with enamel, it is washed out before proceeding.

When the dividing lines are finished and dry, any stray specks of enamel are picked out with a damp, pointed brush—if left, they would show through transparents applied later.

4. The piece is fired gently at around 1400°F. for a few minutes until the lines are glossy. You have to be watchful and remove it before the enamel smooths out too much, and the temperature mustn't go higher than 1450°F. or the exposed foil will burn out (in other words, slightly underfire). The piece is cooled and cleaned in the usual manner.

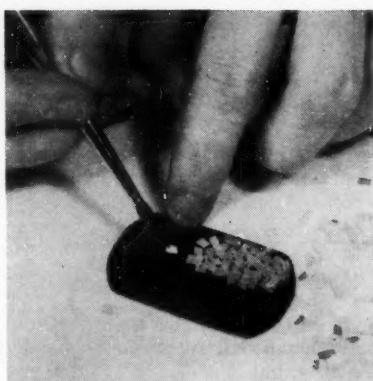
5. For filling the partitioned areas with various colors, the wet inlay method is used. The enamels chosen are those which will mature at the same temperature; otherwise, some would burn out before others had reached full maturity. They may be ground fine if preferred, but I believe certain transparents have more brilliance if used 80-mesh. For flat pieces, the enamel is wet with water; for curved surfaces, agar is needed.

Because the fences are already fired, the colors can be laid in very rapidly. Care must be taken, however, not to run one color over the edge into another. The enamel is packed in place a little higher than the fired lines, bulging slightly as in regular cloisonné (the enamel sinks a little in firing). As each color is completed, it is leveled with a leveling tool, and excess moisture is soaked up with a tiny piece of blotter.

When the wet inlay is finished and dry, the piece is fired again. In fact, when using medium-fusing enamels, I subject my work to two or three rapid firings in a hot kiln (about 1500°-1525°F.); I have found that several such firings give some transparents greater brilliance and depth. After the piece is cool, some areas may be a little cloudy, but this will be remedied in the process to follow.

6. The entire piece is stoned until level—first, with a medium Carborundum; then, when almost level, with a fine stone. The job is done under water so the Carborundum will be flushed off before it grinds into the enamel (turning up as black specks in the finished piece).

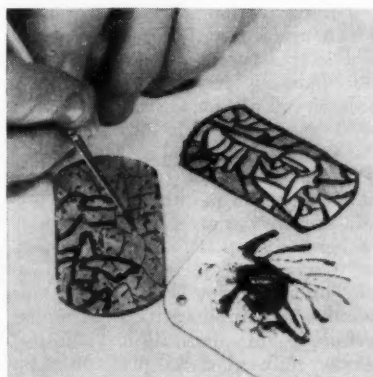
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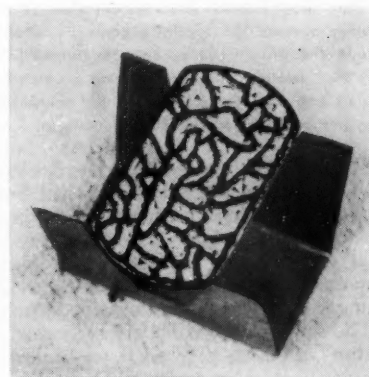
1. Foil bits laid on pre-enameled metal



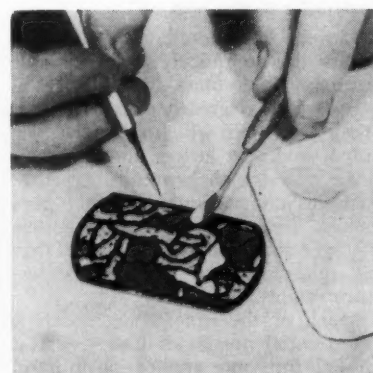
2. Design traced on fired foil background



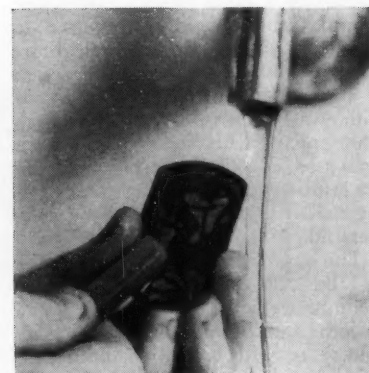
3. Fences laid in with wet black enamel



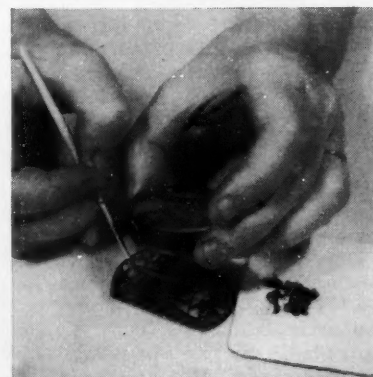
4. Lines fired gently until glossy



5. Colors wet inlaid in partitioned areas



6. After firing, stoning until level



7. Pinhole repair; magnifying glass helps



8. Finished pendant waiting for a chain





## DECORATING GLASS (PART 2)

by ZENA HOLST

"Decoration of glass is easy for anyone familiar with china painting," claims Mrs. Holst, "because the techniques are so similar." There are enough differences, however, to warrant a detailed discussion of the subject.

This was started last month when the author covered the special pigments, how to clean the glass surface, how to transfer a sketch, "frosting and ices," and prepared colors and kits. The following is the concluding portion of her article.—Ed.

### White Pigment Important

Unlike the mineral-color selection for china, white is included in the pigments for glass. The decorator of crystal ware should add a considerable amount of white to the colors on the palette so that the painting will show. (The omission of white is the greatest cause of discouragement to a beginner.) It takes away a good deal of the transparency but it is most desirable for a good effect as otherwise several firings would be required to build up the design. For a more opaque finish, paint the entire design in pure white, fire, and then shade with washes of pure color. Much white, mixed with sugar and water, is also used effectively as highlight for the last firing, the water medium causing the white to "stand up." Obscure glass takes semi-opaque colors nicely.

The powdered colors are prepared on the palette with china-painting medium (which I prefer for a good, smooth application and blending of colors) or with an oil medium provided by the manufacturer. For intense and solid colors, the powder may be dusted over a ground-laying medium as described in a previous article (March). Matt colors prepared for glass are also used in the same way. They look like velvet in contrast to the shiny glass; the areas that are dusted will be opaque.

### Metal Pastes are Fluxed

The use of metals generally is also the same as on china but with one important exception. Where unfluxed paste metals (burnish golds and silver) are used on soft-bodied china ware such as Beleck, Satsuma, semi-porcelain and objects made from art clays (because of the soft glaze coverings), fluxed paste (Roman gold) is used

on glass. Generally, it is best to use the paste metals that are made specifically for glass, but it is not necessary if the objects are decorative and wearability need not be considered. It is a definite requirement that the liquid metals which are fluxed for glass be used.

The transparent colors for naturalistic painting on glass are the most difficult of all mediums with which to decorate crystal ware. Because of the transparency of the glass itself, it is almost impossible to keep a transparency in the painting and still obtain an effect that is pleasing. Tinted backgrounds, such as used on china, are out of the question. All defects and brush strokes show. The china painters, who follow their particular technique in naturalistic painting, choose milk glass as preferable for their type of decorating.

### Lusters for Background

Lusters on glass have exceptional beauty and are quickly applied. There are many fine colors, including cranberry which is greatly admired, as is also a ruby stain which is applied like luster. Both the lusters and the stain make splendid backgrounds for other mediums and particularly for the pure metals. Do not try to use lusters that are made for china because they will not mature at the low temperature required for glass.

Much of the iridescence, which is the essential appeal of lusters, is lost through improper application in hand painting. Do not paint with long, even strokes and a pulling-out with the brush; apply with a stippling motion or a sort of swishing in wavy lines. Even though luster is intended to be patted with a silk pad (which also removes much of the iridescent quality) this is a better procedure than trying to paint smoothly with the brush. (The rule applies also to china.) I like fat and short, pointed, camel hair brushes best for luster work.

Unevenness or uncovered places in the luster painting may be ignored for the first firing—a second application, and firing, enrich the colors. This is particularly true and necessary with the dark shades. If a good coverage has been obtained, the light pearl

hues, however, may be finished nicely in one firing. It is difficult to discern the uncovered places on crystal ware prior to firing. If you look from the back side (or the inside of goblets), or use white paper for a backing, the places may easily be seen. The spots can be touched up by using a very small amount of luster on the tip of the brush—except in the case of the dark colors which are heavy in consistency and dry quickly. Either they must be patted or the luster thinned with luster thinner (called *essence*) so that it will, in effect, run together during the stippling application.

*Essence* is also good to add to luster when you are covering a very wide surface; it keeps the luster from drying too quickly before the joining lines are finished. Only a few drops of the thinner are needed. A large object should be started from the middle front. By working alternately on each side and around to the back, the joining can be made without a dry line which is often unsightly. When lustered inside, a bowl should be started from the center and painted around in circles, the edge last.

### Extending Colors

Do not confuse *essence* with *extender* medium. The latter is added to dark colors to extend them to softer tones that are not so intense. Several dark colors, such as rose, ruby and grape, are so strong that a much prettier transparency can be retained by weakening them with extender, at least for the first firing. The light through lustered crystal ware makes for much of its beauty. If too much extender is added, the color becomes weak and loses much of its richness. Sometimes extender changes the color to a degree; rose may turn to pink with a soft lavender cast.

In using lusters stay away from turpentine as a cleaning vehicle. Denatured alcohol is best for cleansing luster brushes (and there should be a different brush for each color). Spirits of turpentine is the cleansing agent for all other mediums in glass decoration except, of course, water. And remember always to clean the glassware with alcohol before decorating. ●





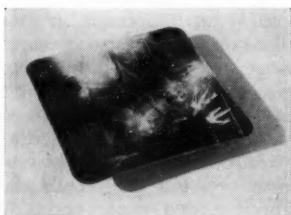
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# SHOW TIME

## *New England 1955 Craft Exhibition*

A GIGANTIC DISPLAY — nearly five hundred items — comprised the New England Craft Exhibition 1955 at the Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum. Representing one hundred sixty-five of the region's craftsmen who work in ceramics, textiles, metal or wood, the show was in the process of selection for two years. It was organized, on an invitational basis, by a committee of the Junior League of Worcester, the Craft Center (Worcester) and the Museum. Ceramics, in the form of pottery and enamels, predominated; in fact, ceramics is the craft, according to the Museum, that "has shown the most dramatic development" since the last such exhibition more than ten years ago. The Worcester showing ended November 27, but part of the exhibition is to be circulated throughout the country by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

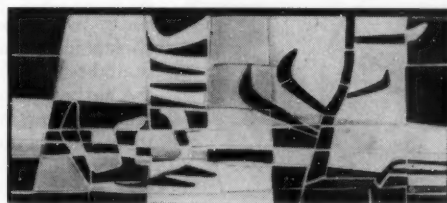
(More Show Time on Page 33)



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### SAMPLING ONLY:

1. Sgraffito-decorated jar — Gerald Williams, Concord, N. H.
2. Cloisonne-enamel tray — Joseph and Corinne Trippetti, Center Tuftonboro, N. H.
3. Cross: enameling — Karl Drerup, Thornton, N. H., pewter metalwork — George K. Salo, Sutton, N. H.
4. Ceramic wall panel — Harris Barron, Brookline, Mass.
5. Stoneware coffee set — Verdelle Gray, Holden, Mass.; mosaic table top—Gerald Williams.

DECEMBER, 1955



5



# A VASE WITH CIRCLES

Decorating Lesson  
by VERA WALKUP

**W**hen you decorate a tall shape that has a curving surface and a neck—such as a vase—certain elements have to be taken into consideration. The way you divide the surface into areas and place the motif is a more complex proposition than when you are decorating a plate or bowl as in previous lessons (May, July). And when the decorative motif is non-representational, like the circle in this lesson, you can't depend on sentiment to draw a response from the onlooker. Since the circle motif doesn't *represent* anything that has meaning for us, its appeal has to come from such qualities as vitality and movement.

Let us start the lesson with a few pointers on dividing the curving surface of the vase. This means starting with banding. The proportions you get with bands are important: they should be interesting and one way of making them so is to vary the width of both the bands and the areas of space they create. But this is not enough. The bands and areas must also suit the particular vase you are working on. The curves are the key (see inset sketch). If there are very sharp curves, the problem is half solved for you because such curves automatically divide the form; bands placed on or near sharp curves will emphasize the curves and outline areas for you. As curves soften, however, you have more freedom or choice in deciding where the bands shall be placed. In such cases, study the surface to decide which portions are the most interesting and then set them off by banding. And keep an eye on the proportions of the areas you create in the process for these, too, must be good. You will probably

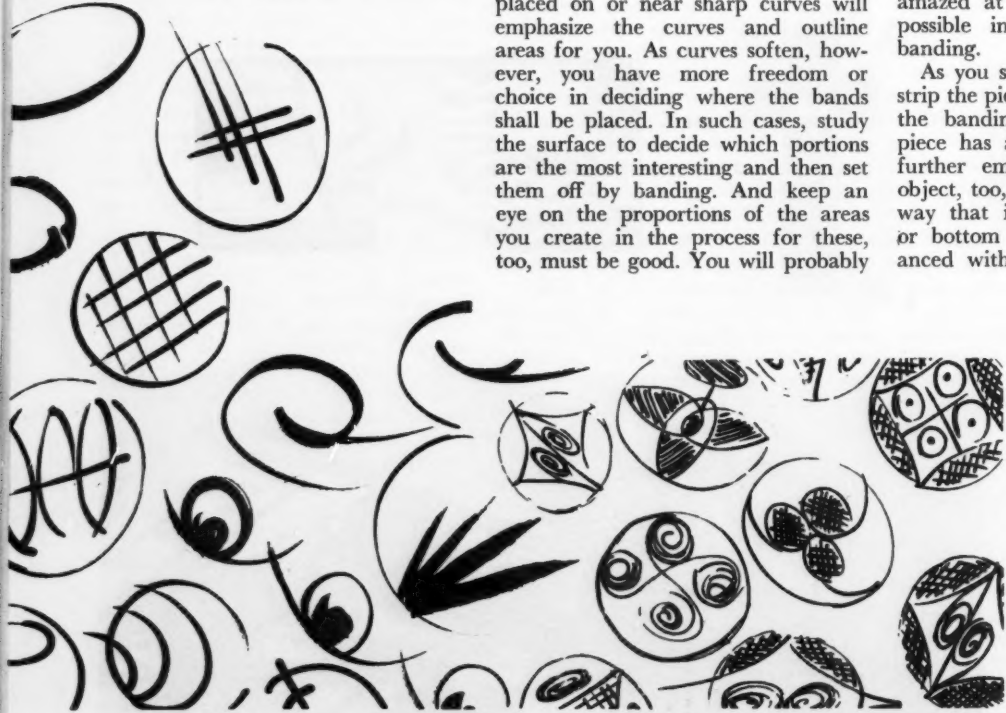
have to move the bands back and forth until the two factors balance.

In the vase we have the new problem of a neck to be taken into consideration. If sharp curves lead into the neck and mouth, they may be accentuated by banding. But the proportions you get should be related to the proportions of the body of the vase. The neck is not just something stuck on the top of the vase; it is part of the whole shape. Often, part of the body is actually included in the area of the neck. That is why banding for the neck is frequently, though not always, done a little way down on the body.

When you are putting in any bands, regardless of their location, consider the width you make them. Beginners are often timid and tend to make the *lines* of bands too thin. If you use a brush, try a larger one than usual; if the band looks too solid, try a group of two or three lines, perhaps varying the width of each and also the spaces between the lines.

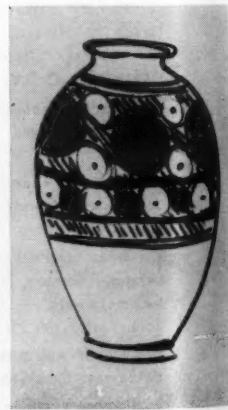
In banding, as in anything else, you will find that you can get in a rut. So look to the illustrated books to see how the old master craftsmen varied theirs. Try some of their ideas on your own pieces; you will be amazed at the freedom and variety possible in anything as simple as banding.

As you study an illustration, try to strip the piece of all decoration except the banding; then notice how the piece has a completed look without further embellishment. That is our object, too, banding a piece in such a way that it doesn't look top heavy or bottom heavy, but perfectly balanced without added decoration.



SKETCH circles by the dozen, swinging them out freely; with sweep and sureness comes vitality of line. Then work up pleasing patterns with your

circles. Divide them with designs placed inside or cutting through; combine different sizes; make circles within circles; connect circles with lines.





Decorative motif, of course, can add to the beauty of the banded piece. But to do so, it must be placed right. Speaking very generally, the motif is often placed in the largest area on the piece. This is the area which will have been most prominently banded. Usually, it is located where the vase swells most because this is the section which holds interest. The motif, therefore, is often placed there too.

But if the vase is a cylinder or a sphere, and there are no pronounced curves, the motif is generally placed a little above the middle and closer to the mouth than to the foot since the latter is a less interesting element. As you study examples of motif placement, however, you will certainly find exceptions to these generalizations.

Since the circle is our decorative motif, let us consider for a moment how it is different from the flower and leaf used in earlier lessons. Because the circle is non-objective, or non-representational, we can't rely on sentiment to carry the design. Let me explain with an example. A woman buying a set of dishes may choose a rose pattern because she happens to like roses: the reason for her choice is an emotional one based on sentiment, and it's perfectly valid. (Some of the world's finest decoration comes from feelings for motifs in nature!) But a circle doesn't have the emotional impact of a rose. You hear a person say, "I like roses," but you rarely hear anyone say, "I like circles."

The emotion a person feels about a circle motif has to come from other sources than sentiment. Among other things, the motif must be so well placed and so well executed that the very *rightness* of the decoration will draw an emotional response. It may sound difficult but it's not really too

ROUNDNESS of the circle played against straight lines of the square for variation: right, Peter Voulkos' jar with slip decoration; below, old Slovakian jug with colorful circles well placed on the swelling section.

hard to achieve.

Begin with developing your motif. Sketch circles by the dozen, working rapidly with pen or brush. They won't be perfect; the lines won't meet and many will turn into ovals. Try to make a perfect circle knowing full well you will never achieve your end. Because you are a human being, not a machine, every circle you turn out will be slightly different from the next one and that is as it should be. At first, the line may be wavering and unsteady, bulging in the wrong places. But swing the circles out, and as you work you will find that some of them have more freedom of sweep and sureness. They will begin to have *vitality*. Vitality in a decoration, the feeling of mastery, is one of the factors that makes us respond emotionally to it.

Now take your circles and divide and combine them in pleasing patterns for your motif. Try crisscross or curved lines within them or through them; overlap the circles, link them together, put circles within circles; combine circles of different sizes. If you run out of ideas, just look around—innumerable circles and arrangements of circles can be seen close to home. The dials on the TV set, for example, are usually made up of groups of circles one within the other and slashed through with the line of a pointer. Leaves, with a little stretch of imagination, became circles cut through with veining lines. Look at a bent twig on a tree, try mentally to project the line of the twig into a

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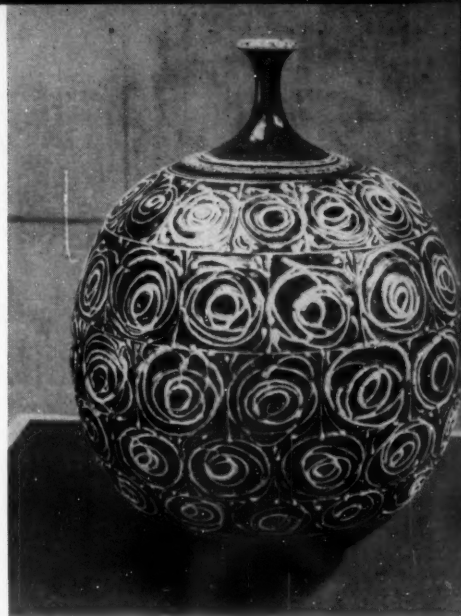
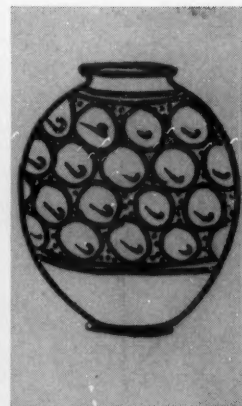
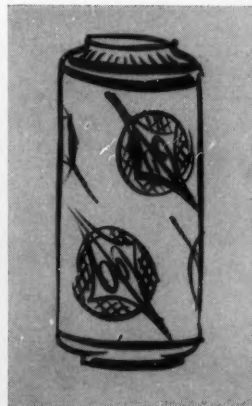
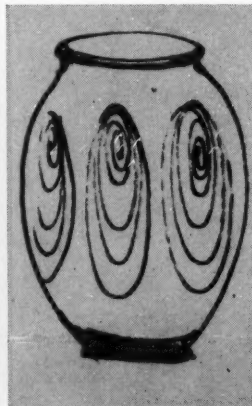
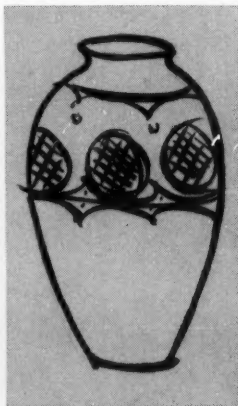


Photo: Oregon Ceramic Studio



PLACE the decoration where it will play up the form of the vase. Usually, the motif is arranged in the largest area which, more

often than not, is located where the vase swells most. Varied shapes and designs in the circles, connecting lines, diagonal ar-

rangements—these are some of the devices that create movement and keep the eye moving around the vase to see the other side.



# Pinchpot Sculpture

## THERE'S A CREATURE IN YOUR PINCHPOT

by PHIL ALLEN

**M**aking pinchpots is fun and also one of the best ways to learn to work with clay, but you don't have to stop there. With a little imagination you can work a pinchpot into sculpture! This is even more fun (sustains interest in handbuilding, elaborates on a learned technique and develops imagination, a teacher might say).

Gary demonstrates the general idea by turning a pinchpot into an eager-looking bird replete with bill and tail.

1. His pinchpot is made in the usual way—a ball of clay is pushed down at the center and the thick wall is

pinched between thumb and fingers until it assumes a symmetrical cup-like shape (see "Pinch a Pot from a Ball of Clay" CM, September).

2. Instead of setting the finished pot aside to dry as he would ordinarily have done, Gary goes right on to the sculpturing process while the clay is still plastic. He closes the rim of the pot carefully, bringing the outside edges together and welding them shut. The piece is handled very gently so that it will stay hollow.

3. Gary continues to close the gap: an elongated form is developing in his hands. The shape suggests a bird



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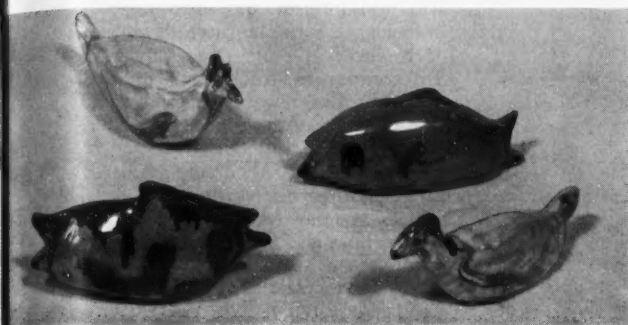


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to him, but another fellow might see possibilities for a whale or an armadillo! Here is where imagination comes in.

4. After the pinchpot is closed, you can pat, roll or even bend it—but always use gentle pressure. Gary flattens the top and bottom of his. At one of the butt ends where the clay is heavy and solid, he shapes the neck and head of the bird, pulling the clay forward with long, easy strokes of his fingers and tapering it for the bird's sharp bill.

5. At the opposite end, the clay is also stroked and pulled to produce the tail.

6. Gary remembers to puncture the clay wall in an inconspicuous place after the forming is finished. The hole is needed to let the air circulate and to help the piece dry more evenly: trapped air in hollow pieces can cause breakage during firing. (If holes are a natural part of the design for *your* sculpture—as the eyes of a fish might be—you needn't of course make additional holes for ventilation.) Now the piece is set aside to dry thoroughly after which Gary embellishes it with underglaze colors and an overall coat of clear glaze. Next time we see the bird, it's hobnobbing with other creatures (above) and you'd never think the lot of them started out as mere pinchpots!

A few suggestions might be added to Gary's demonstration. Let the shape of the closed pinchpot suggest what the sculpture will be—let imagination take over. You can change the basic shape quite freely to get the effect you want; and you can pinch up or stroke out such accessories as ears, mane and legs from the heavier sections (as Gary did to get the head and tail of his bird.) The sculpture will have more unity if you don't add clay. And there is this to remember about the pinchpot you start with: if it is the usual symmetrical type (as Gary's was), it will become an elongated shape when closed. If you want to start your sculpture with a rounder form, pinch out an ovoid, or asymmetrical, pot. ●

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*(Begins on Page 22)*

circle, and notice how other twigs in the background cut through your imagined circle, breaking it into pleasing patterns. You can twist nature around in your mind until you get what you want, and eliminate anything you can't use. The more you look, the more you see; you can grow dizzy with seeing all the circles man



Circles on Harue Oyama's little vase, created with a single, well-manipulated brush stroke, are not perfect. Their deviation only gives the inner pattern greater interest.

and nature have made, and all that has been done to the circle. It is fascinating to look at nature with a "new" eye, discovering her abstract qualities.

Go also to the illustrated books to see how others have handled the circle. Sometimes, it will be a flower but pay no attention to that fact per se for it is not the flower quality that concerns us at this point but the way the circle-flower has been divided.

When you have sketched lots of

circle arrangements, put aside the better ones. (Now is a good time, by the way, to start an idea file; save sketches in a folder for reference when you have run out of ideas. Looking back, you will notice, too, how much you have improved in the meantime.)

When it comes to placing the circle motif on the vase itself, put it in the area which seems to call for decoration to play up the form. Variations in the shape and size of your circles will add interest and encourage the onlooker to turn the piece to see how each circle is done. You might try a decoration in which each circle has a slightly different yet related design inside of it. Another device which takes the eye around the vase to see what is on the other side is an arrangement of circles on a diagonal. Circles connected by straight or curved lines also keep the eye moving.

Movement and a static quality, nicely fused, make a decoration emotionally satisfying. We all crave the static (restful) quality that is achieved, among other ways, in the precision of the placement of the decoration. There should be no feeling that the decoration needs to be moved somewhere else, no question but that it belongs precisely where it is. We also want movement and aliveness—this you get, also among other ways, in the vitality of the execution and the way the decoration leads the eye around the piece.

More on this matter of what it takes to make a decoration alive and satisfying is to come in subsequent lessons. The main thing now is to keep on working, seeing things in nature—and enjoying your decorating. ●

(Begins on Page 16)

Repeat the patting procedure six or seven times, keeping the swab well-saturated with acid. The acid should be left on the china 15-20 minutes, depending on how deep an etch you want to obtain.

A good way to test the depth of the etching is to scratch the edge of the etched surface with a penknife or other pointed tool. You can easily feel the roughness of the china where the acid is eating away the glaze.

When the etching is completed, wash away the acid with running water. If you are working out-of-doors (as recommended), a garden hose is perfect for the washing process because it keeps you from direct contact with the acid. When the piece has been thoroughly washed with

water, you are ready to remove the asphaltum.

Pour enough gasoline or kerosene into a pan to cover the etched piece. Let the piece stand in this cleaning solution for 15-20 minutes. Remove it when the asphaltum has been dissolved, wipe it clean with absorbent rags, and then wash it well with soap and water.

The final step is to lay a clean cloth in the bottom of a pan, place the etched piece on this cloth and then cover with a strong solution of baking soda and water. Set this on the stove, bring it to a boil, and let it simmer for several minutes. Then remove it from the stove, allow it to cool so that the piece can be removed from

(Please turn to Page 28)

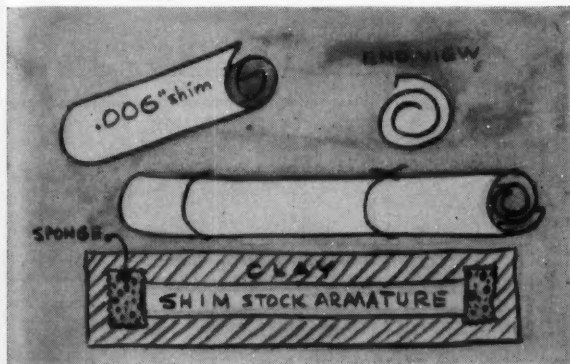


# Shrinking Armatures for Sculpture

The material for the armature is .006" brass shim stock. It is rolled in a coil which imparts a rigidity to it so that it will support the clay yet the metal is allowed to compress within itself with the pressure of the shrinking clay. If longer armatures are used (say one-foot long or more), they should be tied, but not too tightly, at several intervals along the way to keep them from bulging open.

Other thicknesses of metal were used but they were unsuccessful. The only difficulty encountered with this armature was cracking at the ends. Although the clay can compress the armature around its circumference, it cannot compress it lengthwise, so cracks did develop at each end of the armature. This was solved by cutting a sponge-rubber plug for each end to avoid this compression and cracking.

No difficulties are encountered in the kiln. The thin brass will melt at ceramic temperatures; but there is no discoloration or any other noticeable difficulty.—Hilliard M. Stone, Texarkana, Texas.



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## Acid Etching

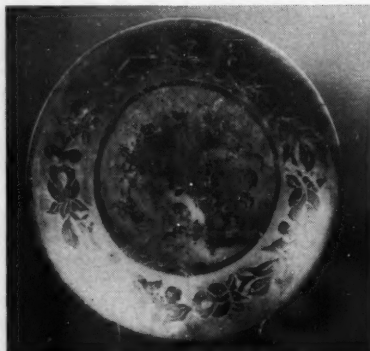
(Continued from Page 26)

the water with the bare hands. Rinse the piece well, and the etching procedure will have been completed.

The most commonly used decorative treatment for etched pieces is the application of gold to the etched surfaces. Two coats of gold are advisable: first, fire on a coat of liquid bright gold, and then fire on a second coat of Roman gold. Many decorators prefer the use of copper, platinum, or silver; you will find that all of the metals make attractive pieces.

Many decorators have created unusual pieces by applying various-colored lusters to pieces—again, two coats (firing in-between) are recommended. The luster may be applied with either a brush or an air-brush as the decorator chooses.

A very effective design can be worked out with a small rubber sponge. By sponging the china with asphaltum, before the etching process,



Etched plate, finished in gold, has a hammered-metal look. The textured area in the center was created by dabbing on asphaltum with a small sponge, prior to etching.

you can obtain an allover design that looks like hammered metal when gold, silver, or copper is fired on. This type of decoration would be a good one for the novice to try on his first piece.

The materials needed for acid etching are obtained easily and at a nominal price. Asphaltum, as mentioned previously, is available at hardware or paint stores or the ceramic dealer's, and hydrofluoric acid can be purchased at most drugstores. Etching may, at first, seem to be somewhat tedious, but the fine effects obtainable are so rewarding that the attending anxiety and trouble are soon forgotten.



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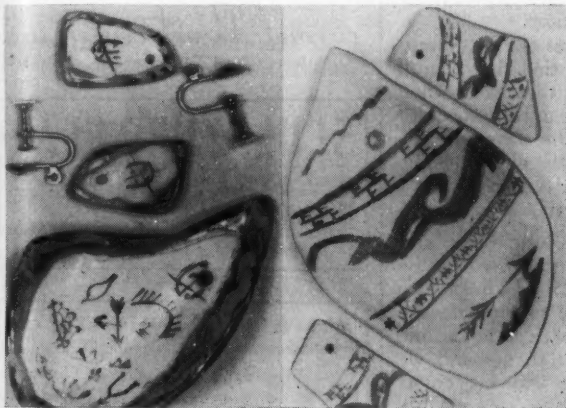
## Jewelry from Scraps



That cast bowl which slipped from your fingers by accident is not a total loss! With a small amount of effort it can be turned into a piece of very attractive ceramic jewelry.

For example, shown above is a piece of green ware (a bowl) that was accidentally broken. Instead of throwing it away or putting it into the scrap container to eventually be remade into slip, I used it to make pin and earring sets.

First, the outline of the three pieces was sketched in pencil directly on the green ware. The area was sponged until damp *but not soft*; the outlines then cut around with a sharp, needlelike tool. Holes for mountings were drilled and the pieces then decorated and glazed. Final results are shown below.—Peg Townsend, Tucson, Ariz.



## Glazing on the Wheel

It is possible not only to decorate a green piece on the potter's wheel (see "Decorate on the Potter's Wheel," May) but also to glaze bisque ware.

Place cross straps of decorator's tape on the wheel head, sticky side up. At the outer rim of the wheel head, these straps can be fastened to the wheel with small pieces of the same tape. Center the pot, then with loaded sponge or brush (I use both) start in the bottom center of the pot working to the top, refilling with glaze as needed. Then, turn the pot over and do the outside. Use the wheel at the slowest speed and exercise care because the bisque pot, at best, is not too securely stuck to the wheel.

As a rule, you will get a nice even coat. If you don't, the thick and thin areas coincide with the concentric throwing marks and seem to fit the pot. This method is especially recommended for matt glazes, which are more difficult to apply. Only a slight touching-up of the rim is needed and the piece is ready for the kiln.—Mrs. G. B. Hodges, Jr., Williamsport, Pa.



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### Wireless Cloisonne

(Begins on Page 18)

When the surface is level, it is scrubbed vigorously with a stiff dental brush and pumice powder followed by detergent. Then the piece is scrubbed again under clear water and patted dry with clean linen (if rubbed dry, the rough stoned surface might pick up lint or fuzz). Now the surface is dull, as though covered with a white film, but refiring will restore the gloss.

7. Occasionally, tiny air bubbles not visible to the eye develop during firing and, when stoned, break down, leaving pinholes. Such flaws can be eliminated by filling in with a bit of finely ground enamel picked up with the point of a brush that has been dipped in a little agar. A magnifying glass helps in such an operation.

After stoning (and "repairing" if necessary), the piece is fired again—either at normal temperature or the quick high fire that brings out more brilliance in some cases.

An even higher gloss can be obtained, if desired, by dusting flux overall in a coating so thin that even when dry it will look like a thin sheet of tracing paper (if the layer is too heavy, the colors will be cloudy). The piece is then refired—a quick, hot firing again being best.

8. When the edges are stoned, and polished with fine steel wool, the enameling is done. The findings, two tiny button rings, are soldered to the bare spots on the back side, a fine chain is run through them—and we have a pendant with glowing colors (green, green-blue, blue, orange accent) fenced in by black lines.

If the background were white or flux instead of foil, the cloisonné part of the process would be the same. But when the fences are fired directly on copper, the exposed metal in the partitioned areas has to be cleaned in acid for a few minutes (to remove fire-scale) and polished until very bright. No firescale should be left clinging to the sides of the dividing lines. Any stray specks of enamel that are found should also be removed, with a Scotch honing stone (this stone is soft enough to do the job without scratching the copper; since scratches show through transparent enamels they are to be avoided unless, of course, you plan them intentionally for texture).

The wireless cloisonné method described here might be considered a basic manner of working which can lead to an unlimited variety of finished pieces. It is a technique that can result in very handsome jewelry and related accessories. ●

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## answers to questions

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**Q.** Is sodium silicate the best deflocculant to use for casting slips?

**A.** Not necessarily. The best deflocculant and exact amount will vary with different types of casting bodies. Sometimes a mixture of sodium silicate and sodium carbonate works best and in some instances phosphates prove more effective than either of these.

**Q.** Can you tell me how to get a patina finish on ceramic sculpture?

**A.** Patina, as you know, is the name given to the greenish film that builds up on bronze or copper after long exposure to the weather. It would be difficult to duplicate this exactly; you can, however, obtain a patina-like effect with a green matt glaze or by rubbing a colorant into the raw clay and firing without a glaze. Your local ceramic dealer, who is, no doubt, familiar with a wide variety of commercial products available, should be able to offer some specific suggestions.

**Q.** Can you tell me what kind of cement is best for putting ceramic tiles in a table top?

**A.** There are many cements, glues, and mastiks, each of which can do a satisfactory job. One thing to take into consideration is the type of surface the tiles are being cemented to. Another is whether or not the material is to show between the tiles. Your best advice would come from a local linoleum and/or tile shop, where special adhesives for ceramic tiles are available.

**Q.** A clay body I recently purchased requires the addition of my own electrolyte when making it into a casting slip. I added what I thought was the right amount and found that it casts very badly and leaves a brown scum on the cast pieces and also on molds. Can you tell me what is wrong?

**A.** An excess of electrolyte will produce a brown scum. Electrolytes, or as they are also called, deflocculants, are very tricky. You can substantiate this fact for yourself when you realize the rather minute quantity required to do the job. By not accurately measuring the amount of electrolyte you added to the casting slip, you introduced the excess, which created the problem.

You can adjust the faulty slip by adding slip which does not contain any electrolyte. The exact amount can be determined only by experimenting.

**Q.** Can you use regular firebrick in the construction of a gas-fired kiln? I have been told that the only disadvantage is that it is much heavier than lightweight insulating brick, but that it will stand higher temperatures (such as 2600° F.).

**A.** You can use firebrick; however, it does not have the insulating qualities of the lightweight insulating brick. You would have to insulate the walls, therefore, in order to cut down the high heat loss that would result. Lightweight insulating brick capable of withstanding 2600°F. is available!

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# That ?/!! Clay Shrinkage!

by HILLIARD M. STONE

The above expletive—or something similar to it—has probably been made by everyone who has worked with clay. It seems that every potter must, from unhappy experience, learn the bitterest fact about ceramics: *clay shrinks when it is fired!*

Does that special turkey-platter that you made for Aunt Maud look more like a saucer now that it has been through the kiln? Did you salvage those large pitchers by knocking off the handles and using them for bud vases? Well, the heart of each potter bleeds in sympathy for you.

But don't sit with your chin in your hands, vowing to make your next ware twice the size that it should be to allow for shrinkage. There is a more accurate method of estimating. The only tools required are a metric scale and a pair of engineers' dividers. The dividers—if you do not already own a pair—can be purchased at almost any office-supply store for about one dollar. The metric scale is preferable to the inch-scale because measurements can be written in decimals rather than fractions, making your calculations easier. For clarification, let's divide the project into two separate steps: Shrinkage Tests and Making A Shrinkage Ruler.

### Shrinkage Tests

Some dealers in commercial clay state the per cent shrinkage of their clays at given cones. Additions to the clay, firing to a different cone, etc., will change the shrinkage; it is a good idea, therefore, to test the clay that you use at the cone to which you will normally fire it in your own kiln.

Make several square bars of the clay, about six inches long and at least one inch thick. The bars should be thick enough to prevent any warpage, since this would ruin the test. On each bar mark the kind of clay that it is, the cone to which it will be fired; and on the top surface incise a straight line the entire length of the bar.

Now, using the metric scale, set the divider points a specific distance apart—for example, 5 centimeters—and make small incisions in the clay, cutting across the line with both

points of the dividers at the same time. If this is done carefully, the marks on the line will be exactly 5 centimeters apart. The more accurately this work is done, the more accurate will be your tests.

Mark on each bar the length of this line—in this example, 5 cm. and set the test pieces aside to dry. Extreme care should be taken to prevent warpage during drying and firing. When the tests are dry enough, stack them flat on the kiln floor or shelves and fire to your usual cone.

After the kiln has cooled, remove the pieces and discard any that show signs of warp. Place the divider points in the 5 cm. marks cut across the line of each test bar and measure the distance between the points with the metric scale. Here again, the work should be done with as much accuracy as possible. The difference between this measurement and the original length of the line will be the amount of *linear shrinkage* of this particular clay at this particular cone. To be more useful, this should be translated into *per cent shrinkage*.

Let us say that the measurement-test line on the bar has shrunk from 5 cm. to 4.35 cm. By subtraction, we see that the line has shrunk .65 cm. Dividing this by the original length and multiplying by 100 we get the per cent shrinkage: .65 divided by 5 and multiplied by 100 equals 13%. The clay has shrunk 13 per cent.

$$\frac{\text{original length} - \text{fired length}}{\text{original length}} \times 100$$

$$= \% \text{ shrinkage}$$

$$\frac{5 - 4.35}{5} \times 100 = 13\%$$

If the test pieces vary slightly in fired length, average the percentages after working them out by the above formula. The more pieces you test and average, the more accurate will be your final answer.

### Make a Shrinkage Ruler

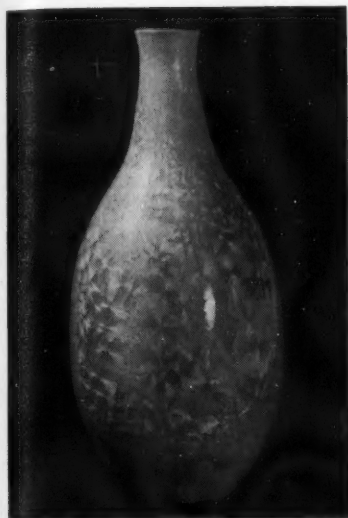
Well, now we know that our hypothetical clay shrinks 13 per cent. But what good will that do us? Working algebraic problems each time a piece is made is just too much trouble. So we will do it only once and use the resulting information to make a

(Please turn to Page 36)



# SHOW TIME

(Begins on Page 21)



Gordon C. Lawson,  
Greenbelt, Md. \$15 award

## Kiln Club of Washington, D. C.

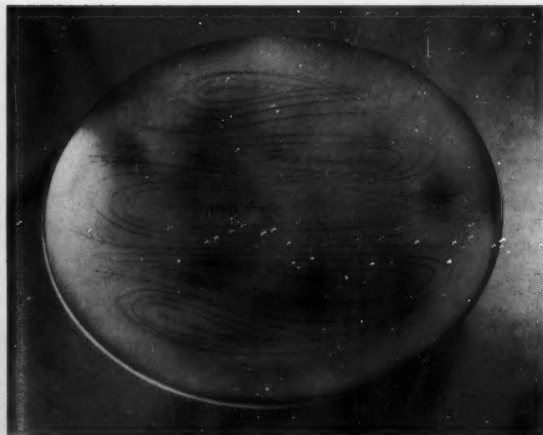
THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL Exhibition of Ceramics, sponsored by the Kiln Club of Washington, D. C. and held at the National Collection of Fine Arts of Smithsonian Institution early last fall, was in three parts. Eighty-six pieces by Americans and ceramists of other countries comprised two invitational sections; a third section, competitive, represented the work of twenty-seven entrants residing in the District, Maryland and Virginia. Except for the Frank A. Jelleff Purchase Award which traditionally goes to one of the American section, prizes were limited to local entries, a few of which are shown here.



Florence Mulhern, Washington,  
D.C. Honorable Mention



John W. Simms, College Park, Md. Honorable Mention



Roger D. Corsaw, Norman,  
Okla., Jelleff Award, \$50

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## ceram-activities

### people, places & things

**AKRON HOBBY GROUP:** "Our hobby group is a sparkplug to the ceramic hobbyists of the Akron area and is really going places," proudly states **Madalyn Yeater**, publicity chairman of the **Akron Mud Hens**. Boasting approximately 200 enthusiastic members and a variety of activities throughout the year, the group recently completed its "Third Annual Ceramic Hobby Show and Exhibition" held at the Portage Hotel in Akron.

As background information on the group, Mrs. Yeater supplies the following: "We meet

enthusiast and anyone who receives money for scheduled classes is not eligible to actively participate in the group (vote or hold office.) To keep ourselves financially solvent, we



Award winners in the children's division, **Cynthia Ormond (15)**, **Ronnie Ewart (7)**, **Gregory Straub (6)**, **Cherily Matthews (6)**, **Diana Robinson (12)**.



First Prize winners (shown receiving awards from show chairman, Mrs. Thomas West, Jr.) are (l to r): front row—**Floreen Dayton**, **Florence Ablett**, **Mary Robinson**, **Elizabeth D'Avello**; back row—**Nancy Dudone**, **Myrtle Watring**, **Elizabeth Bozin**, **Irene Swistel**, **Elaine Paradis**.

once a month at the Akron Art Institute and we exist on a minimum of rules and regulations—the main item on the program at each meeting is something ceramic. New ideas and helpful hints are shared by all members through talks and demonstrations. The organization is strictly for the hobby

sponsor a benefit bridge party each spring.

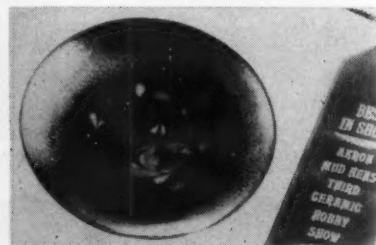
"The main event of the year is the Hobby Show. Each member of the organization is eligible to enter the competition for awards and ribbons. To encourage children, special awards for hand-forming and decorating are given to youngsters ranging in age from six to sixteen. Judging of the show is done by leaders in the art and ceramic field."

The 197 entries this year were juried by **Charles Mosgo**, Cleveland Art Institute; **John Balazs**, Kent State University (Ohio); and **Mrs. Robert McKinley**, McKinley Ceramic Studios, Columbus.

Current officers of the Akron Mud Hens include **Mrs. A. F. Ivy**, president, and **Mrs. H. J. Robinson**, vice-president.



General view of the auditorium during the Akron Mud Hen Hobby Show and Exhibition.



Best of Show—an enameled copper bowl, by **Elizabeth D'Avello**.

#### MEET OUR AUTHORS (the standbys):

■ **Ken Smith** is the man who's got all the ceramic answers. He's been passing them out generously to CM readers, in the "Answers to Questions" column, ever since the magazine started. It's hard to stump him for he has a two-way grip on his subject, being trained in the technical aspects (degree in ceramic engineering from Alfred University, 1929) as

well as the artistic (M.F.A. degree from Ohio State University in 1939). His experience, too, has been wide and rounded. Early in his career he was head of the ceramic art department at Newcomb College, New Orleans, and manager of the famed Newcomb Pottery. During World War II, he taught engineering in a Navy program; and after that, he went to Honduras as visiting professor of ceramics in the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes at



Tegucigalpa. In 1946, he joined the American Art Clay Co., at Indianapolis, as Manager of the Ceramic Division, the position he now holds. He still finds time to teach—at the annual summer workshops in pottery and enameling which are sponsored by Amaco and the John Herron Art School; and he is invited frequently to judge ceramic shows. The Smiths have a son, Clay, who is more interested in sports than ceramics, his father reports.

■ There isn't much that **Zena Holst** ("The Overglaze Page") doesn't know about the technique of using mineral pigments (china paints), gold, lusters, enamels and raised pastes. It is a subject she has lived with, nourished and taught for nearly half a century.

Brought up in a period when china painting was considered an art rather than a hobby, Mrs. Holst at a very early age was taking lessons and establishing close contact with leading decorators of the day (including Aulich, Campana, Heckman, Cherry, Titze, Robineau, O'Hara and Paist). She became a teacher and has operated studios off and on throughout her adult life. With the growing enthusiasm for ceramics, after World War II, Mrs. Holst began to investigate china painting on low-fire bodies. The "Dresden look" was what she was after. Told it couldn't be achieved, she continued her experiments and "I found that the cone 06 body was comparable to our old Satsuma ware in taking decoration. I really think I instigated china painting, as of this era, on low-fire clays..."

Since April, 1954 Mrs. Holst (who lives in Salt Lake City, Utah) has been a Special Contributor to CM—the expert whose advice on overglaze decoration appears regularly.

■ Biographical notes on other CM standbys (Sellers, Rebert, etc.) will be coming up.

**FEW ARE CHOSEN:** But if you have more than ordinary talent and want to dig much further into ceramics, you might keep an eye out for the scholarships for advanced study that occasionally become available. For example, the **Louis Comfort Tiffany Scholarships** for 1957—grants up to \$2000—will go to ceramists "who have already demonstrated their capacity for sustained effort..." (Tiffany Foundation, 1083 Fifth Ave., New York 28.)

**TIP FOR SANTA CLAUSES:** Look for ceramic gifts at the numerous arts and crafts sales held this time of year for the benefit of Christmas shoppers. The **Newark Museum's** 4th annual Christmas Exhibition-Sale of work by **New Jersey** artists and craftsmen is now in progress ("objects of good design at low cost") and there'll be others spotted around the country. (See "Itinerary", page 8.)

**ON THE MOVE:** Jo Rebert, the enamelist, reports that now she really knows copper from the ground up, having visited a copper mine enroute to the West Coast last Septem-

ber. The author (of the CM series, "Jo Rebert Enamels") and her family have moved from Columbus, O., to Los Angeles where her husband, Charles, has joined the chemical engineering faculty at the University of Southern California. "Our stuff is distributed all around the country," she writes, "but my large box of enamels arrived today so I can begin washing, drying and storing them..." We miss Jo's frequent visits to CM's editorial offices in Columbus. But readers need have no fear that her enameling series will be interrupted: she has at least a dozen articles ready to go, and many others underway.

**Miska F. Petersham** ("Wood-Ash Glazes," CM, Oct.) closed his Fort Lauderdale shop and went back to school this fall. He is working for the M.A. degree in ceramic sculpture at Syracuse University, and also teaching there. "I will have the use of the pottery facilities so I have hopes of getting quite a bit of work done."

**UP TO THEIR NECKS:** Georgia people are up to their necks in ceramics and liking it, says **Mrs. Lee D. Davis**, President of the newly organized **Georgia Ceramic Hobby Association** which held its first show at Atlanta



early in the fall. The show was "wonderful," she reports, with 599 entries from some 50 exhibitors. Sweepstakes winner was **Mrs. John Baker** of Atlanta with eight wheel-thrown bowls, vases and plates. Shown in the photo, working at the show in front of a special display of **Ceramics Monthly**, are **Mrs. Ralph Anderson** (l), vice-president; and **Mrs. G. W. Brubaker** (r), assistant show chairman.

**ON WITH THE FAIR:** Highly pleased with the new setting for their annual State Craft Fair at East Stroudsburg State Teachers College, members of the **Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen** say they're going back again next year "with plans for even more outstanding activity." Preceded by a seminar, the three-day event this year was composed of sales, demonstrations, an exhibit of more than 100 jury-selected articles made by members, and awards (top pottery honors going to **Kathleen Bots** of the Harrisburg Chapter and **Marjorie Dutton** of the Philadelphia Chapter). Reports by Fair Chairman **Mary Bowles** and President **John W. Weikel** on the generally high quality of articles brought to the fair appear to reflect the Guild's year-long campaign for higher standards of craftsmanship.

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### CERAMICS MONTHLY

4175 N. High St. Columbus, Ohio

## That Clay Shrinkage

(Begins on Page 32)

shrinkage ruler which can be used for all future measuring of green ware.

A shrinkage ruler is one that is longer than it should be: an inch on it is longer than an inch; a foot is longer than a foot. But measuring with the ruler will tell you how large the fired ware will be. If a green ware pot measures 7½ of these big inches before it is fired, it will be 7½ actual inches after firing.

An old yardstick or a straight stick of equal size will make a good ruler. Give it a coat of white enamel and set it aside to dry while we figure out what to put on it. We will make the ruler 15 big inches long. Since it shrinks 13 per cent, the clay will be 87 per cent of its green length after firing. (Subtract the percentage of shrinkage from 100.) If we want an object 15 inches long after firing, that 15 inches must be 87 per cent of the original size. So:

$$87\% \times \text{unfired length} = 15$$

$$.87 \times \text{unfired length} = 15$$

$$\text{unfired length} = 15 \text{ divided by } .87$$

$$\text{unfired length} = 17.24$$

Our 15-inch ruler must be 17.24 inches long. (This lacks only 1/100 inch of being 17¼ inches, and 17¼ is the closest measurement possible.) Measure a length 17¼ inches on the painted ruler and make a line at each point. Now with the dividers, step off 15 equal spaces between the two lines. If the divider point does not come out exactly on the dot on the 15th step, readjust the divider setting slightly and keep trying until it does. Then mark each place where the divider points touch the ruler. These 15 divisions will represent inches. If you wish to further divide the inches into halves and quarters, the dividers can be used again in the manner described above. Smaller divisions than ¼ inch would be difficult to make with any degree of accuracy.

You will find such a ruler invaluable in your work. It can be used for measurements while making molds, throwing on the wheel, and checking the size of any green ware. The ruler should be labeled with the per cent shrinkage it represents as well as the name of the clay and the cone to which the clay will be fired. •

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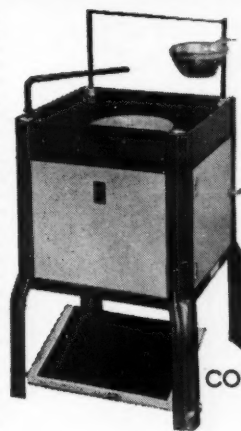


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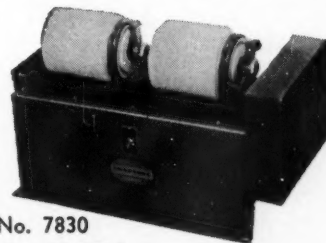
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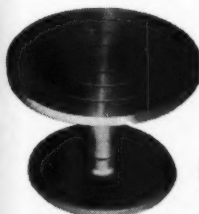
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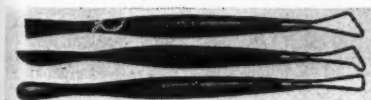


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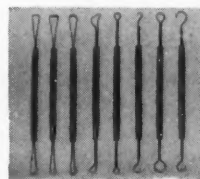


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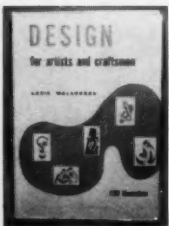
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